

ORANGE BOWL VICTORY ISSUE

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FOOTBALL REWIND
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On the Cover: Devon Achane races down the sideline for the go ahead touchdown in the Orange Bowl.

Photo by Matt Pendleton / Texas A&M Athletics

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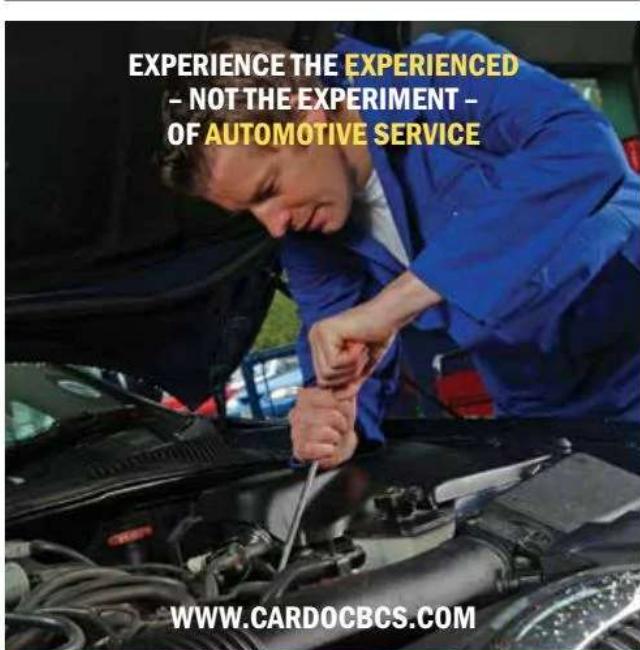
In 1944, Texas A&M appeared in their first Orange Bowl. On that day the Aggies ran out of time 19-14 to LSU. On January 2nd, 2021, the Aggies won their first Orange Bowl by defeating North Carolina 41-27. It was the program's first appearance in a New Year's 6 game. The Aggies deserved a shot at the CFP, but instead of pouting about it and laying an egg, they rose to the occasion and beat the #13 team in the country. The Aggies will finish this season in the top 5 and are on course to win a national championship. The team believes they can and will win a natty, their ultimate goal. The strides that Jimbo has accomplished since taking over the program are quite impressive. He knew when he decided to come here that A&M had all of the things you need to win a championship. But you have to have a vision and a belief in order to make that happen. He has recruited the best athletes and developed them into the best players. Buddy Johnson recently talked about the first time Coach Fisher addressed the team and how they were joking around, "He snatched off his glasses just like that and said 'What are ya'll laughing at? There's nothing funny here—it's straight business.' Since then you can tell the change, the sense of urgency around the building and everything that comes with it. "He talked about coming in and changing the culture, and he's done just that," Johnson said. The Aggies finished the season with a 9-1 record in the best division in college football. They overcame obstacles and finished strong on an eight game winning streak. Just five months ago, we weren't even sure we would have football this year, but the Aggies worked hard to stay healthy. As a result, they finished the season on one of the biggest stages in the nation. They were #5 in the CFP for several weeks and are sure to finish this season even higher! Congratulations on an outstanding year! Can't wait to see us compete for a championship real soon!

Gig'em Ags!

Rob '88



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... the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat

Junior defensive end Tyree Johnson celebrates a forced fumble against quarterback Harrison Bailey. The Aggies dominated the Volunteers to put an exclamation point on the regular season. The defense held Tennessee to only 24 rushing yards and 189 yards through the air. Texas A&M finished the regular season with a seven-game winning streak to post eight SEC wins! Photo by Craig Bisacre/Texas A&M Athletics





snapshot



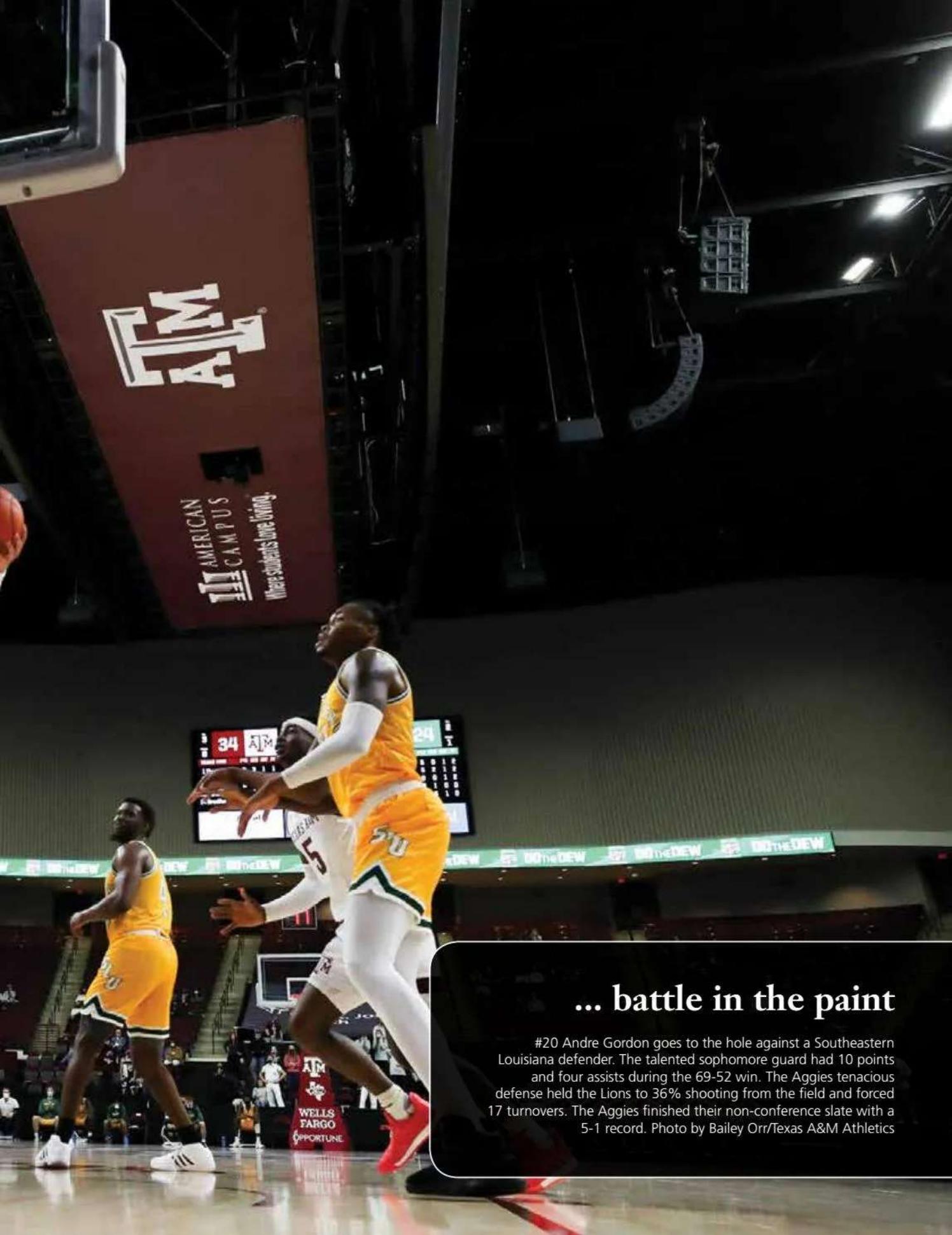


... gatorade shower

Aggie Soccer celebrates a regular season SEC championship by giving Coach G. Guerrieri a victory shower. The Aggies went 7-1 in the regular season and wrapped up a share of the championship with a 2-0 win over Auburn. It was their third regular season title since joining the conference. The Aggies also have three SEC Tournament titles for a total of six SEC crowns. Inset picture shows the team posing together after the match. Photos by Rob Havens '88

snapshot





... battle in the paint

#20 Andre Gordon goes to the hole against a Southeastern Louisiana defender. The talented sophomore guard had 10 points and four assists during the 69-52 win. The Aggies tenacious defense held the Lions to 36% shooting from the field and forced 17 turnovers. The Aggies finished their non-conference slate with a 5-1 record. Photo by Bailey Orr/Texas A&M Athletics



[VOLLEYBALL] The Aggies wrapped up the fall portion of their schedule with a couple of 3-1 setbacks to Arkansas. The spring portion of their schedule will begin on January 30th when they travel to Auburn. Texas A&M will host Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama and Florida this semester. In addition to the two matches vs the Tigers, the Ags will also travel to South Carolina, Georgia and Missouri. After the final match of the fall, Coach Bird said "We have work to do over the break. The biggest part of our season is in the spring, so we have a lot of work to do. We'll come back and get ready to compete."



[MEN'S BASKETBALL] Texas A&M went 5-1 in non-conference play including a big win over former Aggie basketball coach Billy Clyde Gillespie and the Tarleton State Texans. It was the first time that Buzz Williams had coached against his former boss. The Ags won 73-66 against the scrappy bunch from the WAC conference. There are a lot of new faces on this year's team, but returners Savion Flagg, Emanuel Miller, Andre Gordon and Quenton Jackson are the core players responsible for this year's success so far. The Aggies faced LSU in their first SEC game but came up short against the team that Buzz says is a top-ten squad.





[SOCCER] After a little hiccup vs Arkansas in the second game, the Aggies reeled off six straight wins to win the regular season SEC Championship. Needing a victory in the final game against Auburn, the Aggies dominated the Tigers and won 2-0. It was the third regular season SEC Championship that the Ags have won. The team went on to defeat LSU in the SEC Tournament before falling to eventual tournament champion Vandy 1-3. The No. 8 Aggies wrapped up the fall portion of their schedule and look forward to competing for a National Championship this spring.

[WOMEN'S BASKETBALL] The team went undefeated in non-conference play for the first time in program history. They won nine games, including big wins over #19 DePaul in Chicago and another against arch-rival Texas in Austin. It was the first win in Austin since February of 2011. This team is loaded with talent, and may be the deepest team Coach Blair has had. They finished off the non-conference schedule with a record-breaking performance over Northwestern State. The Aggies won 112-26, setting records for the most points in a game and the biggest differential of victory. The Aggies rose to #9 in the polls and look forward to battling for a conference championship and a trip to the Final Four in 2021.



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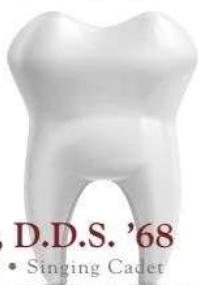


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FOOTBALL REWIND 2020

GAME 7

LSU

TEXAS A&M 20 - LSU 7

At the beginning of the season, teams prepared themselves for the likely postponement or cancellations of games due to positive tests or contact tracing. The Aggies were supposed to play the Vols on Nov 14th and the Rebels on the 21st, but COVID-19 and the contact tracing protocols kicked in and the conference was forced to juggle the schedules. The Aggies lost two weekends of play and were admittedly a little rusty when they faced the Tigers. On a rainy and dreary night, the Aggies found a way to win and beat the defending national champs 20-7. The offensive line dominated the line of scrimmage, and Isaiah Spiller rushed for 141 yards and a touchdown. The defense dominated LSU, allowing only 36 yards on the ground. The Bayou Bengals found the end zone with less than a minute to play, making the final tally appear closer than it actually was. An interception by linebacker Buddy Johnson in the third quarter gave the Aggies the momentum they would need to defeat the Tigers. Spiller had the Aggies' longest run of the season when he raced 52 yards for a first quarter score. Freshman DB Jaylon Jones got his first interception of his Aggie career. Jimbo complimented the team for finding a way to win an old-fashioned slugfest.



GAME 8



TEXAS A&M 31 - AUBURN 20

Since A&M joined the conference, almost every game in this series has been won by the visiting team. The Aggies were hoping to continue that trend as they took the field at Jordan-Hare Stadium for game number eight. Quarterback Bo Nix, however, did his best imitation of Johnny Manziel on a couple of drives, and the Ags trailed going into the fourth quarter. That's when the Aggies took over and dominated the end of the game scoring 17 points in the final period to beat the Tigers 31-20. Mond was pinpoint accurate on the day, completing 18 of 23 passes with two touchdown throws. Spiller was a workhorse for the Ags, carrying the ball 20 times for 121 yards. True freshman Devon Achane showed off his track and field speed by adding 99 yards on just 9 carries. Ainiias Smith combined for a total of 99 yards in receptions and rushing yards and had a touchdown run of his own. Showing why he is regarded as one of the best tight ends in the country, Jalen Wydermyer caught 8 passes for 89 yards, including a tipped ball catch for one of his two scores on the day. The Aggies possessed the ball for over eleven minutes in the fourth quarter, arguably their best quarter of play in the entire season.



GAME 9



TEXAS A&M 34 - TENNESSEE 13

Going into the final regular season of the year, the No. 5 Aggies were looking to make their final pitch to get into the CFP final four. The Vols had struggled this season and experts said the Aggies needed a convincing win to finish off the season. The Vols shot out of the gate and cruised down the field for the first touchdown of the game, but after that, it was all Texas A&M. Kellen Mond threw for 281 yards on 26 of 32 attempts and added another 59 on the ground as the Aggies pounded the Volunteers. The Aggies' two headed monster of Spiller and Smith accounted for three touchdowns. The Aggies once again controlled the time of possession, allowing Tennessee just over 16 minutes with the ball. The win gave the Aggies a seven game winning streak to finish off the regular season and eight conference wins in the best division in college football. The Aggie defense allowed only 24 yards on the ground for a resounding defeat. Junior Hezekiah Jones had a career day for the Aggies posting 66 yards on seven catches. DeMarvin Leal and Tyree Johnson both forced fumbles and sacked the quarterback. The Aggies could have easily scored more but as Jimbo puts it "we win with class and dignity!"



[GAME 10: A&M 41, NORTH CAROLINA 27]



ORANGE BOWL VICTORY

BY ROB HAVENS '88

In a time where a lot of student athletes put themselves before the team, the Aggies came together, put the team first, and won the Orange Bowl over North Carolina. With "opt outs" spreading across the country after the regular season was over, the fans held their breath, waiting to see if anyone on our team would take that route. We all took a deep sigh of relief as Jimbo notified the media that no Aggies had made that decision.

At the pre-bowl presser, Senior offensive lineman, Carson Green, admitted as much when he said, "I don't know, the whole opt-out thing, everyone can make it what you want. Like I don't think anybody on our team is going to quit on our team like that." He also said, "I think it's one of those things, too, we owed it to Texas A&M to play it out. You know, Coach Fisher might not have recruited me, but I owe a lot to Sumlin, just letting me come here, letting me play. And I owe a lot to A&M to finish out my part of the contract and play out all my games, since they are providing a scholarship and letting me play here."

Those words were sweet music to our ears, to hear a student athlete express gratitude and a sense of responsibility to play all of the games that they committed to when they accepted their scholarship. Green's comments gave us hope as we approached the kickoff of the 2021 Orange Bowl.

The other factor in play before the Aggies took the field was the question of how being snubbed by the selection committee of the CFP would affect our team. There is a long history of teams that go into bowl games disappointed and not playing well in those games. Our guys had every right to be disappointed by not making the playoff, but they showed real character by moving forward and attempting to finish the season strong.

The Aggies were playing in the Orange Bowl for the first time since 1944. Although the atmosphere was different due to the reduced crowd size required by COVID-19 protocols, the amazing Hard Rock Stadium was quite impressive. Before the game kicked off we were notified that starting linebacker Aaron Hansford was unavailable for the game. So for the Aggies "next man up" mentality, it only makes sense that the first big play of the game came from his replacement, Andre White Jr. White Jr.

intercepted Howell on his second pass of the game and returned the ball to the Carolina 13-yard line.

Just seven plays after the turnover Isaiah Spiller had an impressive nine-yard run for the Aggies' first touchdown. It was the first of two scores for the talented sophomore who was a workhorse for the Aggies all year. He was injured during the game but still added 50 yards of rushing to his season total of 1,036 yards. Making him just the thirteenth Aggie to rush for over 1,000 yards during a season.

The Aggies led 17-13 at the half as the feisty group from Chapel Hill showed they were there to win. They controlled the ball for much of the first half, but the Aggies responded with an 8-play, 75-yard drive that ate up 4:36 of the second quarter and resulted in a Spiller three-yard score to give the Aggies the momentum right before halftime.

The teams traded punts on their first two possessions of the second half before the Tar Heels finally put together another long drive. It looked as if the Aggies had collected their second interception of the day when Brian George picked off a Howell pass in the end zone, but the Aggies were called for a substitution infraction and the play was nullified. One play later UNC scored a go ahead touchdown to lead 20-17.

The Aggies tied up the score in the beginning of the fourth quarter when Seth Small connected on a short field goal. The tie would be short lived as Carolina's Howell found Josh Downs sprinting past our secondary for a 75-yard touchdown on the very next play. He celebrated with a thumbs down to our fans in the stands. For a lot of teams this play would have been catastrophic, but Coach Fisher always preaches to our kids to focus on the next play, and that's what they did.

The Aggies marched 75 yards on their next series to tie up the game once again at 27. The big play on the drive was a Kellen Mond pass to Ainias Smith for 54 yards. The talented utility player juked and fought his way to the six-yard line. Three plays later, Mond decided to take care of things himself, as he sprinted and dove into the end zone.



With just 5:07 left in the game, the Aggies were pinned deep in their own territory, and the game was on the line. Freshman Devon Achane decided to take over. He gained two yards on first down and then collected a Kellen Mond pass for another nine yards to set up the play of the game. With a first and ten at the Texas A&M 24, Achane received a handoff from Mond on a counter play with Jalen Wydermyer blocking in front of him and Ainius Smith blocking downfield. He got tripped up turning the corner and then broke a tackle to race 76 yards for the go ahead score.

The Tar Heels had one chance left but the Aggie defense rose up and stopped them on third and one and again on fourth and one. Jayden Peevy made two huge plays that stopped UNC and gave the ball back to the Aggie offense.

Devon Achane wasn't satisfied with just running out the clock. He had three carries for a total of 34 yards on the final drive and put the cherry on top by blasting into the end zone from one yard out to make the final score 41-27.

Jimbo Fisher showed he's still got some athleticism as he raced down the field into the end zone to avoid the Gatorade shower from his players. After the game Jimbo Fisher accepted the Orange Bowl Championship Trophy, and oranges were tossed out to the team and their families in the crowd. Devon Achane was named the MVP of the Orange Bowl.

Late Saturday night after the game Coach Fisher visited with Scott Van Pelt on SportsCenter and said, "Our goal is to win the national championship. That's why we came here. That's what A&M is here for." Fisher continued, "We went 8-1 in the SEC, the best league in ball, the best division in ball. We know we got work to do when Alabama's in there, we know Auburn, we know LSU, we know Mississippi, Mississippi State, Arkansas all of them. We can play with anybody. We're not arrogant, but we're confident in what we got. We're recruiting well, and that's the next step, which we got to take, and tonight was a big step."

When Jimbo came to A&M, he told the team "It's not gonna be the way it use to be!" In only three short years, he has taken this team to the highest level since we won a national championship in 1939. He has definitely changed the national perception and the culture of our program. ■

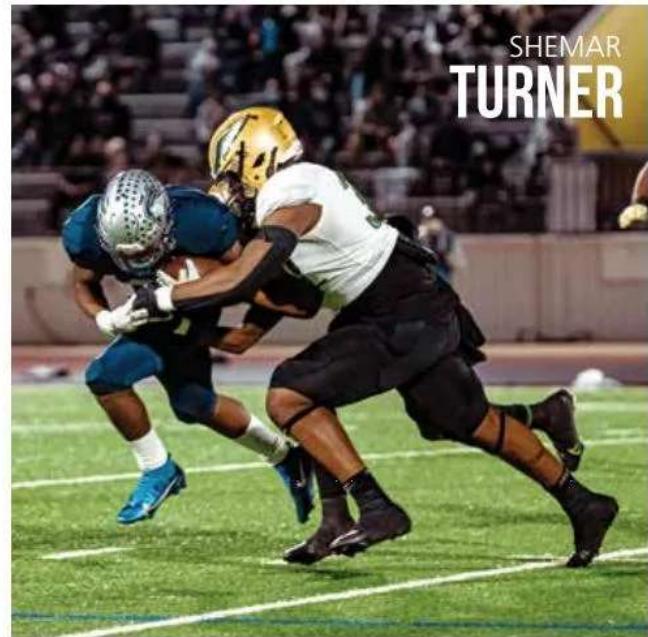




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2021 RECRUITING CLASS ★★★★



STACKING IT UP

How the Ags' 2021 recruiting class ranks in the SEC

1. Alabama Crimson Tide
2. Georgia Bulldogs
3. LSU
4. Texas A&M Aggies
5. Florida Gators
6. Tennessee Volunteers
7. Ole Miss Rebels
8. Arkansas Razorbacks
9. Missouri Tigers
10. Mississippi State Bulldogs

TUNMISE ADELEYE



POSITION DEFENSIVE LINE

HEIGHT 6'4" WEIGHT 250

HIGH SCHOOL KATY TOMPKINS

HOMETOWN KATY, TX

Chose A&M over Bama, Ohio St. & Auburn. Selected to play in the Under Armour All- America Game.

SHADRACH BANKS



POSITION WIDE RECEIVER

HEIGHT 6'0.5" WEIGHT 215

HIGH SCHOOL NORTH SHORE

HOMETOWN HOUSTON, TX

Chose A&M over Bama, Auburn, & Arkansas. Selected to play in the All-American Bowl. Had 8 rushing td's & 13 receiving td's in 2020.

YULKEITH BROWN



POSITION ATHLETE

HEIGHT 5'9" WEIGHT 180

HIGH SCHOOL MIAMI CENTRAL

HOMETOWN MIAMI, FL

Chose A&M over Bama, Florida & FIU. Selected to play in the All-American Bowl. One of the most versatile prospects in South Florida in 2021.

MARCUS BURRIS



POSITION DEFENSIVE LINE

HEIGHT 6'4" WEIGHT 275

HIGH SCHOOL PLEASANT GROVE

HOMETOWN TEXARKANA, TX

Chose A&M over Bama, BYU & Arizona. Texas Sports Writers Association 4A First-team All State selection as a junior.

TYREEK CHAPELL



POSITION DEFENSIVE BACK

HEIGHT 5'11" WEIGHT 180

HIGH SCHOOL NORTHEAST

HOMETOWN PHILADELPHIA, PA

Chose A&M over Penn State, Michigan State & Cincinnati. Allowed only 2 catches on 41 targets as a junior. Is already on campus and ready for spring ball.

AMARI DANIELS



POSITION RUNNING BACK

HEIGHT 5'9" WEIGHT 195

HIGH SCHOOL MIAMI CENTRAL

HOMETOWN MIAMI, FL

Chose A&M over Georgia, Florida State & Auburn. Selected to play in All-American Bowl. Rushed for 890 yards and 7 td's in 2020. Max Preps Preseason All-American Second-team selection in 2020.

KENDAL DANIELS



POSITION DEFENSIVE BACK

HEIGHT 6'4" WEIGHT 190

HIGH SCHOOL BEGGS

HOMETOWN OKMULGEE, OK

Chose A&M over Bama, Clemson & Auburn. Selected to play in All-American Bowl. Had 120 tackles in 2020 including 14 TFL and 6 sacks, with 4 interceptions.

REUBEN 'DEUCE' FATHEREE II



POSITION OFFENSIVE LINE

HEIGHT 6'8" WEIGHT 305

HIGH SCHOOL FOSTER

HOMETOWN RICHMOND, TX

Chose A&M over Bama, Georgia & LSU. Was first team all-district at OT as a sophomore and freshman. A standout on the hardwood as well, he is a top 100 OL signee.

BRYCE FOSTER



POSITION OFFENSIVE LINE

HEIGHT 6'4.5" WEIGHT 330

HIGH SCHOOL KATY TAYLOR

HOMETOWN KATY, TX

Chose A&M over Georgia, LSU & Oklahoma. All-American Bowl Invitee. 2 sport athlete recruit. Will also throw discus and shot put for Aggie Track & Field.

**FERNANDO
GARZA****POSITION** TIGHT END**HEIGHT** 6'5" **WEIGHT** 244**HIGH SCHOOL** KATY**HOMETOWN** KATY, TX

Chose A&M over Colorado, Arizona & Michigan State. Comes to A&M as a two-sport athlete. He will also be a right-handed pitcher for Aggie baseball.

**DEUCE
HARMON****POSITION** DEFENSIVE BACK**HEIGHT** 5'10" **WEIGHT** 190**HIGH SCHOOL** DENTON GUYER**HOMETOWN** CORINTH, TX

Chose A&M over Arkansas, California & Texas. 2019 first-team all-district selection as a junior. Great speed, could be an excellent returner.

**JAHZION
HARRIS****POSITION** DEFENSIVE LINE**HEIGHT** 6'4" **WEIGHT** 215**HIGH SCHOOL** ERASMUS HALL**HOMETOWN** STATEN ISLAND, NY

Chose A&M over LSU, Miami & Michigan. The state of New York didn't play in the fall so he is going to be playing his senior year in the spring before heading to A&M in May.

**DREYDEN
NORWOOD****POSITION** DEFENSIVE BACK**HEIGHT** 6'1" **WEIGHT** 175**HIGH SCHOOL** NORTHSIDE**HOMETOWN** FORT SMITH, AR

Chose A&M over Arkansas, Auburn & Duke. Mostly played quarterback in high school, but will move to the other side of the ball for the Aggies.

**KENNETH 'TREY'
PHILLIPS III****POSITION** LINEBACKER**HEIGHT** 6'0" **WEIGHT** 219**HIGH SCHOOL** FORT BEND BUSH**HOMETOWN** RICHMOND, TX

Chose A&M over Indiana, SMU & Georgia Tech. Was a first-team all-district selection at safety as a senior.

**ALBERT
REGIS****POSITION** DEFENSIVE LINE**HEIGHT** 6'1" **WEIGHT** 300**HIGH SCHOOL** LA PORTE**HOMETOWN** LA PORTE, TX

Chose A&M over Arkansas, Tennessee & Texas. First-team all-district selection as TE as a junior. 2018 District 21-6A Sophomore of the Year.

**ELI
STOWERS****POSITION** QUARTERBACK**HEIGHT** 6'4" **WEIGHT** 215**HIGH SCHOOL** DENTON GUYER**HOMETOWN** CORINTH, TX

Chose A&M over Clemson, Georgia & LSU. 2019 Texas AP second team all-state as a junior. Texas District 5-6A Co-Offensive MVP.

**REMINGTON
STRICKLAND****POSITION** OFFENSIVE LINE**HEIGHT** 6'4" **WEIGHT** 300**HIGH SCHOOL** FORT BEND CHRISTIAN**HOMETOWN** SUGAR LAND, TX

Chose A&M over Arkansas, Texas & OU. Came from a small private school but drew national attention for his size and playing ability.

**SHEMAR
TURNER****POSITION** DEFENSIVE LINE**HEIGHT** 6'3" **WEIGHT** 280**HIGH SCHOOL** DESOTO**HOMETOWN** DESOTO, TX

Chose A&M over Bama, Georgia & LSU. Selected to play in Under Armour All-America game. He was coveted across the nation and a big 5 star get for the Aggies.

MATTHEW
WYKOFF



POSITION OFFENSIVE LINE

HEIGHT 6'5.5" **WEIGHT** 304

HIGH SCHOOL MAGNOLIA

HOMETOWN MAGNOLIA, TX

Chose A&M over Texas, Notre Dame & USC. 2019 first-team all-district selection as a junior. He is from just up the road in Magnolia but received offers from all over the nation.

TREY
ZUHN



POSITION OFFENSIVE LINE

HEIGHT 6'6" **WEIGHT** 300

HIGH SCHOOL FOSSIL RIDGE

HOMETOWN FORT COLLINS, CO

Chose A&M over Nebraska, Michigan & Oklahoma. At 6'6 300lbs he will fill in nicely as another Maroon Goon.

SHADRACH
BANKS



MATTHEW

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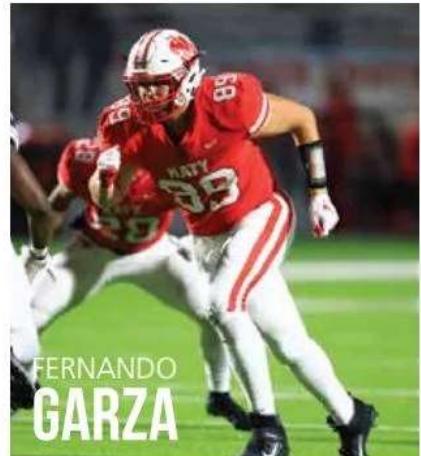
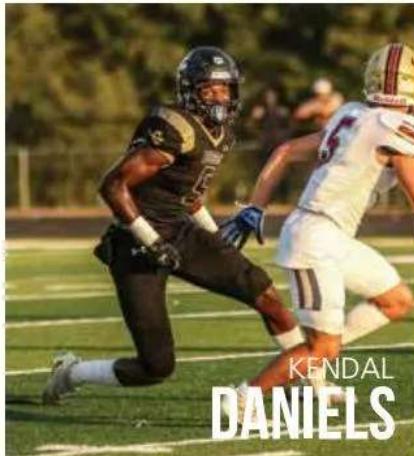
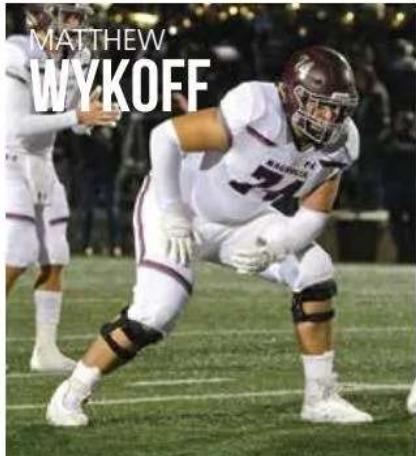
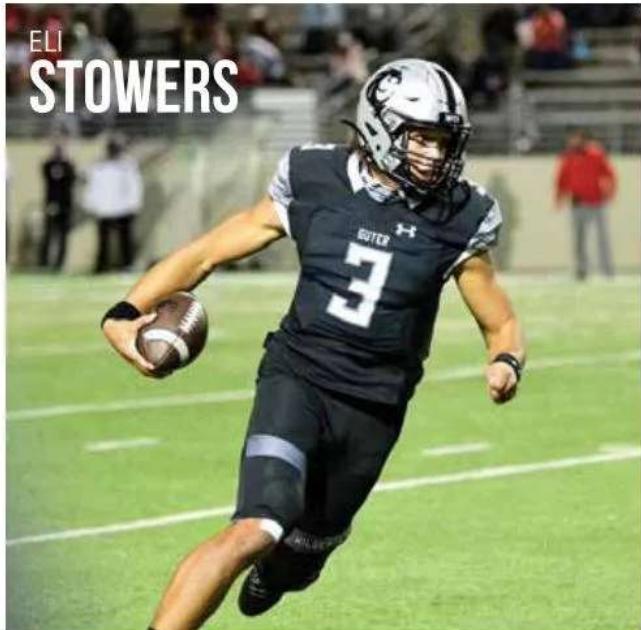


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GRAND OPENING & GROUND BREAKING OF SATELLITE REC CENTERS

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Texas A&M is a premier university that has garnered numerous awards and developed a reputation as an elite educational institution from which to receive a well-rounded education and preparedness for a career after graduation. Being healthy and physically fit are key for students to successfully attack the rigors of the grind required to achieve that goal.

The National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) guidelines recommend 587,000 square feet of indoor recreational space for a campus the size of Texas A&M. However, the main Student Recreation Center ("the Rec") is markedly shy of that recommendation, having approximately 415,000 square feet. The main facility features a strength and conditioning room, an indoor walking/jogging track, handball/racquetball courts, and indoor courts for soccer, basketball, volleyball, and badminton. It also offers indoor rock climbing and bouldering walls, outdoor basketball and sand volleyball courts, activity rooms, and a world-class natatorium featuring five different pools.

But even with almost 30,000 square feet of strength and conditioning space, there were still lines of students waiting for machines. The entire facility was still packed with people, and the need for more room was apparent. "A&M's enrollment increased faster than we did," said the director of the Department of Recreational Sports, Rick Hall. Hall shared a story about how former Texas A&M president, Dr. Michael Young, toured the Rec on a day when classes were cancelled; it was packed with students and Dr. Young exclaimed, "You need more facilities!"

That endorsement from Dr. Young launched the strategic planning process, which involved many campus partners, to provide additional facilities to meet the demand resulting from the increased number of students. Two potential facility

locations were identified to increase accessibility for the growing student population; one would be incorporated into the five-story parking structure being built on Polo Road, and the second would be located on the south side of campus near the hub of residence halls. The price tag to build the two new facilities was determined to be roughly \$40 million, so support from students would be needed.

The "Vote Rec" campaign was launched in early 2018 to inform students about the two new facilities and the fee increase that would be required to make them happen. The idea was appealing to students because having access to all three facilities would allow them more options in addition to avoiding the long trek across campus to use the main Rec. The turnout and response for "Vote Rec" was tremendous, even though the students knew that by the time the new facilities were completed, most of them would have graduated and left the university. "They knew it was the right decision for the future of Texas A&M students," said Hall.

The Polo Road Rec Center, which shares space with Transportation Services and Dining Services, is the smaller of the two facilities with 28,000 square feet. Located near the intersection of University Drive and Polo Road, the facility is in close proximity to the Zachry Engineering Education Complex, adjacent to the Emerging Technologies Building, and across University Drive from Century Square. The Polo Garage Facility will also house the Polo Road parking garage, Transportation Services offices, and several popular dining vendors including Shake Smart, The Market, Salata, Houston Street Subs, and Panda Express.

Although not large enough for courts or a jogging track, the Polo Road Rec Center features a strength and conditioning room complete with free weights, machine/pin select strength

equipment, cardiovascular machines including treadmills and ellipticals, and a 2,000-square-foot free motion AstroTurf area for exercises, medicine balls, and stretching. In addition, the facility will house an activity room for fitness classes that will be offered daily for Rec members. Locker rooms, towel service, and free, day-use lockers will be available as well.

Rec Sports will celebrate the grand opening of the Polo Road Rec Center, located at 322 Polo Road, with a ribbon cutting ceremony on January 22nd, followed by the grand opening for students at 1:00 p.m. the same day. The grand opening event—part of Texas A&M's spring Howdy Week—will include a variety of activities and give-away items for students.

"We couldn't be more excited to expand recreational opportunities and promote activity and wellness for our Aggie community," said Hall. "The important benefits of campus recreation include physical wellbeing, stress reduction, and self-confidence. We are thrilled to provide another convenient, on-campus facility to meet the needs of the students, faculty, and staff."

To meet increased demands of a fast-growing Texas A&M student body and to provide more support for student health and wellbeing, Texas A&M Rec Sports is expected to break ground in January 2021 on its third facility, the 63,000-square-foot Southside Rec Center. This facility will offer additional strength and conditioning areas, indoor court space for basketball, volleyball, and

indoor soccer, a bouldering wall, locker rooms, and other amenities. It will be located off Bizzell Street across from Krueger, Mosher, and Rudder Halls and adjacent to the Texas A&M Golf Course. Construction of this facility is expected to be completed in mid-summer of 2022.

"It's an exciting time in Aggieland as we prepare to open one facility and break ground on another!" said Hall. "These two new facilities are expected to be very popular. Many dedicated folks have been working countless hours to make these satellite recreational facilities happen and to give our students convenient, first class facilities of which they can be proud." ■



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ARCHERY CLUB

BY ROB HAVENS '88

One of the most successful sport clubs on campus is the Archery Club. They have won the national championship 21 times and are hopeful to add number 22 in 2021! The current club has approximately 50 members and their president is Nick Swidryk.

We love to hear about all the sport clubs at A&M, and we always ask the presidents about their favorite moment since joining the club. When we posed this question to Nick, he replied, "My best moment since I have been on the team was when our former president, Mick, called to let me know that I was going to be the next president of the team. It really made me feel like my hard work and dedication had paid off and that I would be able to be an even bigger part of the team."

The club got started back in 1977. One of the most unique things about this club is that the three current coaches—Frank Thomas, Lorinda Cohen-Gomez, and Bill

Coady—are all professors at Texas A&M.

Swidryk told us that members typically join because they have heard about the team's success or because they discovered archery through one of the kinesiology classes and have taken a very serious interest as a result. Some members join the team with previous experience before coming to A&M, but about half gain their experience by taking Kinesiology 199 Archery courses held during both the fall and spring semesters.

When we asked Nick what makes a great archer, he replied, "I would say dedication and hard work. All of the archers that I have had the pleasure of meeting and competing alongside in my archery career have almost always been dedicated to the sport and extremely hard workers when it comes to practicing and attending competitions."

There are three main types of competitions that collegiate archers can attend: indoor tournaments, outdoor tournaments, and 3D tournaments. As of now, the team is looking forward to hosting the USA Archery Indoor Nationals in order for members to

shoot qualifying scores for the first half of selecting the All-American teams at the end of the semester. They also hope to shoot in the Vegas Shoot tournament, which is using an online tournament format. If the university allows it, they will once again try to bring home a National Championship when they travel to Virginia in May for the USA Archery Collegiate Outdoor Nationals.



Rec Sports
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

GYMNASTICS CLUB

BY ROB HAVENS '88

There's a good chance you have seen members from our next featured club as you walked to Kyle Field for football games. The Gymnastics Club raises money on game days by doing "Flips for Tips." It's a great fundraiser to help members lessen their expenses required to participate in the club.

We enjoyed getting to talk to three of the club's officers—Kaylee Connolly, president; Alden Brown, vice president; and Lauren Porter, treasurer—and the women's team captain, Renee Woodruff, for this story.

The Gymnastics Club was founded in 1923 by a group of Texas A&M students who loved to tumble. According to Connolly, "These non-scholarship students encouraged Aggies of all skill levels to join and learn how to flip. Today, we encourage Aggies from beginner to elite level gymnasts to come work out for the love of the sport!"

In fact, Kaylee Connolly joined the club with no experience. She told AI, "I joined the team my freshman year of college with no experience whatsoever. I have always wanted to be a gymnast, and the idea of

a group of gymnasts welcoming beginners was amazing to me. I was hesitant at first, but the atmosphere within the gym made me realize how special this team was, and I wanted nothing more than to be a part of it. I have learned so much about the sport in the past three years and I am honored to be able to serve as the team's president!"

We asked Lauren Porter why students join the club. She replied, "There are so many reasons why our members choose to join. We have members that have never done gymnastics before, members who have done gymnastics their whole life, and all in between. For the members who have done gymnastics their whole life, they typically come in wanting to find a way to continue the sport that they have always loved so much. I remember that being one of the main reasons I wanted to join the club. For others, they are looking for a challenge and something new to try. The most common reason all of the members join is to be a part of our family. All of the members are very close and it is a wonderful place to make friends and become a part of a close-knit group."

There are 40 members on this year's squad, including Jared Miscisin, who was the national champion in 2019. We asked

Renee Woodruff what makes a great gymnast, and she said, "In my opinion, there are two key qualities that make a great gymnast and a great athlete in general: drive and humility. A gymnast who is not self-motivated will not be able to weather the physical and mental challenges of the sport and will likely burn out or stagnate in their gymnastics. The qualities of humility and a willingness to listen to others are also important. Raw talent can only take you so far, and every athlete needs to remember that there are always things they can learn from others."

The team is hopeful they will be able to compete this spring, whether it be in person or virtually.







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A photograph of three white vans parked in a lot under a cloudy sky. The vans have "ABA SERVICES" branding on their sides. In the foreground, a large white van is angled towards the camera. In the background, two more vans are parked further back. Overlaid on the image is text: "ABA SERVICES" in large white letters, "COMMERCIAL DRYWALL & PAINT | 979.704.3077" in smaller white text, and "CONGRATULATIONS ORANGE BOWL CHAMPS" in large, bold, white text within a dark rectangular frame.

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